

A Robbery Reversed

By HOWARD FIELDING

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As to Mrs. Willard's diamonds, the sequence of incidents was certainly out of the ordinary. The lady, alone in her carriage, was on her way to the house of a friend with whom she intended to spend the evening. It may have been about half past 8 o'clock.

"Martin," she called to the coachman suddenly, "drive home again."

Mrs. Willard could bring clearly into view a jewel casket containing some thousands of dollars' worth of diamond ornaments, but she could not see Mrs. Lee Willard in the act of putting it away in the cunningly devised hiding place in the head of the quaint, old fashioned couch that stood by the north wall of the apartment.

No member of the family was at home except her niece, Miss Amy Barton, who had come to her room with her headache, and Mrs. Willard's maid would probably have joined the other servants in the rear of the house immediately after her mistress' departure. The butler was a new man.

When the carriage drew up abreast of the door Mrs. Willard sprang out before the spy footman could offer his assistance, and at that instant she described a dark figure hastily withdrawing into the mouth of the narrow court that ran along the north side of the house.

"Who is there?" she cried. The figure seemed to hesitate and then came forward into the light of the avenue.

"It is I, Mrs. Willard," said this suspicious character, lifting his hat. "Tom Lawrence," exclaimed the lady as if he had been a schoolboy, although there really was little difference in their years. "What were you doing there?"

"I stepped in out of the wind to get a light," he replied. "A light for what?" she demanded. "For my cigar, of course," he answered, with a trace of embarrassment. "I've thrown it away now."

She looked at him for ten seconds closely. "I want to talk to you," said she at last. "Come into the house. Oh, that's all right," she added, seeing his look of surprise. "You won't see Amy, though, upon my word, I believe you would have done so if I had not returned so soon."

"Your husband?" "Is out of town," she interrupted. "That he would approve my course if he were here. He won't let you call on Amy?"

"Because I haven't enough money." "Because you haven't enough stability of character," answered the lady severely, though, as before, she spoke in a tone too low for the ears of her liveried servants. "But come. I have a reason for haste."

She ascended the steps just as the door opened in response to the footman's ring. Passing the butler, she turned a keen eye upon him, for something in his appearance struck her as unusual and vaguely disquieting, so much so indeed that she asked him sharply what was the matter.

"I don't know, mum," he replied. "I do feel him, mum, but it's only just this instant a little bit—dizzy-like."

"You have been drinking, I am afraid."

"A sip of beer, mum, with my dinner," he replied, "the same as is allowed the other servants—no more, I do assure you."

Mrs. Willard turned away, at the same time commanding Mr. Lawrence by move of her hand to wait her return. As she ran up the stairs she had a glimpse of Miss Amy Barton in the hall above. The young lady seemed to be fully and very becomingly dressed and to have come recovered from her indisposition. Mrs. Willard found the door of her dressing room open, and the place was in disorder.

She ran across the room. The little secret nook in the head of the couch was open. Casket and jewels were gone. Mrs. Willard was not an excitable woman, and her self command in emergencies was excellent.

"Where have you been since I went out?" she demanded of the butler. "I never got out of my chair, mum, till you came back," said he. "What makes you talk so strangely?" she asked. "You are drunk; you have been asleep."

"I protest that it isn't so, mum," he answered, with tears in his eyes. "I'm sick. I'm taken sudden with something. I don't know what."

Then he suddenly regained his self control and got upon his feet. "What's wrong—what's wrong, mum?" he cried excitedly. "All my diamonds are gone!"

"But—but," stammered Lawrence, "this man could see that door from here. It isn't possible!"

"In view of his condition," she began. "I was all right," groaned the butler. "I was as well and wide awake as ever in my life till I got up to let you in. Nobody went near that door or I'd have known it."

"Ah," said Mrs. Willard, "here is Lucy!" The trim maid entered at that moment by a door at the rear of the hall, and she stared in amazement at her mistress.

"Lucy," asked Mrs. Willard, "how long were you in my dressing room after I left?"

"Not above a minute, my lady," replied the girl. She was too well trained to ask "why" except with her eyes. "My diamonds are gone, Lucy," said Mrs. Willard. "The door is broken, the room is all torn to pieces, and the diamonds are stolen."

The door, opened it, revealing two men. They stepped into the hall—a heavy, sandy haired, red faced man holding by the arm a thin, dark, foreign looking individual.

The burly man was Detective Sergeant Brice.

"I beg pardon, ma'am," he said, addressing Mrs. Willard. "I'm a head-quarters detective, and my general business is circulating round through this neighborhood looking for house-breakers of various kinds. I caught this fellow prying open one of your windows on the alleyway just now. I'd been shadowing him for an hour or more. He says he used to be a servant here and that he was coming to see another one. Same old story, of course. I brought him in to see if you could identify him."

"His name is Davoll," said Mrs. Willard in the tone of one dazed. "He was my butler before this man. But—but you say you've followed him for an hour and that you caught him before he actually got into the house?"

"Yes, m. Why not?" said Brice. "Because the robbery has already taken place."

"It has?" exclaimed the detective. "Within half an hour."

"No, ma'am; excuse me," said Brice. "Nobody has robbed this house within a half hour or an hour either. This man's been hanging around for as long as that, and my partner and I have had our eyes on the premises."

"But my diamonds are gone," said Mrs. Willard, and she gave Brice the story, including the drugging of Norton, the new butler, now so completely overpowered that it was thought best to send the footman for a doctor.

"I guess he drugged himself," said Brice. "It's an old game. We'll find the diamonds hidden somewhere about. They must be in the house, for only one person has gone out of it, and you brought him back with you."

"Toot!" exclaimed Mrs. Willard, turning to Lawrence.

"I admit that I made a call of a few minutes upon Miss Barton," said the young man. "She herself let me in. We remained in the hall. Norton, your butler, was here."

"The figure seemed to hesitate and then came forward into the light of the avenue."

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front. The robbery is done, the servant is drugged, and then the thief breaks into the house."

"The thief?" echoed Mrs. Willard. "I have your solemn word," said Davoll hastily. "No charge at all, eh? Nobody to be punished—nobody whatever? Is it so?"

"If my diamonds are returned," said Mrs. Willard, "that will close this case."

"All right," exclaimed the Frenchman. "The diamonds they are here." He thrust his hands rapidly into various pockets and brought forth the entire lot of jewels.



"THE DIAMONDS ARE HERE!"

"You—you?" exclaimed Officer Brice. "Why, it isn't possible!"

Mrs. Willard was scanning the gems with care.

"They are all here," she said. "Now tell your story. No harm will come to you or any one else because of this."

"Ah, madame," responded Davoll, "it is so good of you to say that! When these men trapped me and brought me here I thought all lost. Figure it to yourself, me with the plunder in my pockets. But they know it not, and by quick wit I find a way of escape through this bargain that I have made with you."

"Now, then, a friend of mine in this house drug this man Norton. That same friend took the jewels and set them by a window in the basement. While these men watch me after I pry the windows open I am filling my pockets with the gems from the casket which stand just inside. It was my friend also who broke the lock of the door of your room and made everything to look so much upside down. After I get the jewels she throw the box into the court."

"Lucy!" exclaimed Mrs. Willard. "Where is she?"

"She has gone," replied Davoll gravely. "I have given her plenty time. It was for her as well as for me that I make my bargain. You comprehend? It was all lost. If these men drag me to the station house they search me and find the gems. They discover everything. It was for me to think quick. I tell you, when they brought me in here, I was good, I think. And your promise—will you keep it? You will not cheat me, eh?"

"Not I," said Mrs. Willard. "I am in many ways too much relieved."

And she looked at Tom Lawrence out of the corner of her eye.

TURNPIKE SAILORS.

The term by which Tramps are known throughout England.

The term "ocean tramp" is known to many of us. Its verbal antithesis, "turnpike sailor," is probably less familiar outside thieves' circles, where, Mayhew tells us in his "London Labor and the London Poor," it is used to denote a beggar masquerading in mariner's garb. Among the Wessex peasants, whose vocabulary, if limited, is singularly effective, it bears a rather meaning. Thus they designate a particular class of "travelling folk" who roam the country from place to place as a sailor roams the sea. The name might well be applied to the whole no-man tribe—hawkers, gypsies, itinerant showmen and the like—but for some reason or other it is confined to the tramp proper, the seedy, out-at-elbows individual who is to be seen slouching along the highroad or begging from door to door in the villages. Sometimes he is alone; more often a friend of his own degree keeps him company; occasionally a depressed looking wife and ragged children straggle at his heels. He tells not, neither does he spin; he "begs no rent," as an aggrieved householder remarked to the present writer, and he seldom puts into port for longer than a night at a time unless compelled by circumstances beyond his control, when he is lodged in a specious mansion, he boarded gratis and is provided with the "job" which he professes to be always anxiously seeking and seldom manages to find. As a rule, he sleeps "rough"—in the open, that is—in any convenient shed, except when the state of his finances permits him the luxury of the humble lodging house, which, on the evidence of a country policeman, is "the noisiest, drunkiest" he has met. Most said "the jolliest"—place in the town—London Spectator.

Quaint Remedies.

Among members of the Greek church in Macedonia the following recipes are regarded as highly useful: To pacify one's enemies write the psalm "Known in Judea," dissolve it in water and give your enemy to drink thereof, and he will be pacified. For a startled and frightened man take three dry chestnuts and sow them in three glasses of old wine and let him drink thereof early and late. Write also "In the beginning was the word" and let him carry it.

First Aid.

"Now," said the professor, "suppose you had been called to see a patient with hysterics—some one, for instance, who had started laughing and found it impossible to stop what is the first thing you would do?"

"Amputate his funny bone," promptly replied the new student—Houston Post.

The Great Drawback.

"Well, the statements they make against you aren't true," said the politician's wife. "Why don't you deny them?"

"I'm afraid I will incite them to dig up some other libelous statements that are true,"—Philadelphia Ledger.

HAD A FIXED INCOME.

An Unfortunate Question and a Perfectly Frank Reply.

A lawyer who formerly practiced his profession in Georgia tells in the New York Telegram this amusing case which he once tried in that state. He was then a student in the office of his uncle, Colonel Culver, who figured in local politics. A "trifling" negro, Ben Sutton, had been arrested at the instance of his wife, who was tired of supporting him and insisted that the court make him work.

I defended Ben at the instance of my uncle, who was, I am sorry to say, inclined to curry favor with the colored voter. Ben was on the stand, and I was examining him.

"Now, Ben," I said, "Amanda declares in her complaint that you don't give her any money, and—"

"That old woman's always complaining," interrupted my client.

"Yes, I know, but what I want to ask you is: Are you able to support her? Have you any income—that is, any fixed income?"

Ben looked puzzled. I tried to explain and told him that a fixed income was an income on which a person could rely absolutely, not one contingent on odd jobs—in other words, a certainty. My uncle was sitting at my elbow coaching me, and I thought I was doing right well. "Now, tell the court," concluded, "have you a fixed income?"

"Yessar," answered the black scamp. The answer almost took my breath away, for I had not counted on it.

"What?" I thundered. "You mean to say that you, Ben Sutton, have a steady, reliable and fixed income on which you can absolutely depend?"

"Yessar," he repeated in desperation. "What is it?" I gasped in desperation.

"Well, sar, you see," returned Ben, "Colonel Culver, them, always givs me 'bout a sack uv flour on ever'lection day."

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

Pardon others often; thyself never—Publius Syrus.

We like to divine others, but do not like to be divined ourselves.—Rochefoucauld

The Good Spirit never antedates. He never gives us today what we shall need tomorrow.—Emerson.

Do not make excuses to yourself for your failure, but look them squarely in the face and study how to avoid their repetition.

Life is a burden imposed upon you by God. What you make of it, that will be to you. Take it up bravely, bear it joyfully, lay it down triumphantly.—Gail Hamilton.

We dig and toil, we worry and fret, and all the while close over us bends the infinite wonder and beauty of nature, saying: "Look up, my child! Peel my smile and be glad!"—G. S. Merriam.

God has put it into man's power not to fall into evil, and the fact that we cannot avoid death shows that it is not a real evil, else God would have put it in our power to avoid it.—Marcus Aurelius.

A man who lives entirely to himself becomes at last obnoxious to himself. I believe it is the law of God that self-centeredness ends in self nausea.

There is no weariness like the weariness of a man who is wearied of himself, and that is the awful Nemesis which follows the selfish life.—J. H. Jewett.

The One Above.

I especially remember Emile de Girardin, editor, spouter, intriguer—the "Grand Emile," who boasted that he invented and presented to the French people a new idea every day. This futile activity of his always seemed to me best expressed in the American simile, "Busy as a bee in a tar barrel."

There was, indeed, one thing to his credit: He had somehow inspired his former wife, the gifted Delphine Gay, with a belief in his greatness, and a pretty young woman illustrating this. During the revolution of 1848 various men of note, calling on Mme. Girardin, expressed alarm at the progress of that most foolish of overturns, when she said, with an air of great solemnity and pointing upward, "Gentlemen, there is one above who watches over France." ("Il y a un la-bout qui veille sur la France.") All were greatly impressed by this evidence of sublime faith until they discovered by the context that it was not the Almighty in whom she put her trust, but the great Emile, whose study was just above her parlor.—Andrew D. White in Century.

Showing Him Up.

Servant—There's a gentleman down stairs, ma'am.

Mistress—Show him up to the drawing room.

Servant—But he has come to clean the chimney.

Mistress—Then show him up the chimney.

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